

# MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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## NEWS FROM PALESTINE

At the Quarterly Communication of The Grand Lodge of Scotland held in August, 1948, the Grand Master received the following report from Brother Bartholomew.

"I am greatly honoured at being present this afternoon at this meeting of Grand Lodge on my return from Palestine, and I bring you the hearty greetings of the District Superintendent of Palestine.

"It has been extremely difficult for some considerable time now to have any progress in Masonry in Palestine. In fact, for the past several months it has been almost impossible to hold any meetings at all. In some of the places where the population is not mixed, such as Jaffa and Tel-Aviv, Lodges have been able to carry on, but where the population is mixed, as in Haifa and Jerusalem, it has been practically impossible.

"The population have been forbidden to hold meetings in the temples. They have been able to hold meetings in other places, but it has been very difficult to have any advancement made at all. It is very grievous to think that in the cradle of Masonry there should be such strife and bloodshed going on incessantly.

"There in Jerusalem—with the royal quarries where the stone was hewn for the building of the Temple and where Masonic meetings have been held, the Temple still standing up inside the wall, and outside the wall the Jews wailing and praying incessantly as they have done for the last twenty centuries, the Mosque of Omar, which is only second in importance to the Moslems to Mecca, in this atmosphere, which was, as I say, the cradle of Masonry, it is tragic to think that the progress which has been made since the end of the last war (1914-1918) has all had to be suspended.

"In fact, one of the English Lodges has already been transferred, I understand, to London, and another one is carrying on. The Scottish Lodges, those who work in Arabic, or Hebrew, will not only carry on, but a large number of the British population has moved away from Haifa up to Lebanon, and there it is hoped Masonry will gain strength and so compensate for what has been lost in Palestine.

"We can only hope that the Jews and the Arabs will one day work in harmony together, as I am quite sure they can, and so prepare the way for a development of Masonry, as without love and harmony they cannot possibly advance."



## MORE LIGHT

The suggestion was made in our January issue that fifteen minutes could be profitably spent at every regular lodge meeting in discussing some phase of Freemasonry. A simple plan was mentioned and the hope expressed that at least one Worshipful Master would resolve to give his members an added something to the usual routine of business and degree work. It is too early at this writing to discover whether or not there is one bold spirit ready and willing to try out the plan.

Your Committee on Masonic Education has been endeavouring to arouse an interest of this kind for a very long time. From time to time the lodges have been invited to request speakers for their meetings but the result was practically fruitless. One wonders if we have a membership truly interested in making an advance in Masonic information.

There comes to our desk an occasional enquiry asking direction for a course of Masonic reading. This is not always an easy task. There is a wide variety of source material available and before one sets out on a voyage of discovery among our Craft literature it is advisable that a proper background should be prepared. It would be foolish to send the young initiate books which are intended for a brother with some Masonic experience as well as a general knowledge of our history and philosophy.

The first book we would recommend as a starter is the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. True, this contains the regulations which govern Freemasons in this jurisdiction but something more will be found as you study its pages.

Take, for example, the "Summary of the Old Charges." These were prepared in 1722 by James Anderson, a Presbyterian minister in London, England, and the work was done in accordance with instructions from and by authority given by the Grand Lodge of England, which had been formed in 1717.

The Constitution as adopted by our own Grand Lodge will give the reader an intimate knowledge of the working procedure of his own Grand Lodge.

We meet in Annual Communication once each year but the activity which is carried on day by day is under the control of one of the Standing Committees of the Board of General Purposes. Thus, between Communications, the Board is the administrative or managing body so to speak and its powers and duties are all set out in the Constitution.

Grand Lodge is an incorporated body under powers given by a Special Act passed by the Province of Manitoba. The act is printed in the Constitution and every lodge officer should familiarize himself with its details because it affects the constituent lodge as well as Grand Lodge.



This brief summary gives you but a fleeting glimpse of what can be learned from reading what is recommended as the first step toward a Masonic education. Let us make a second selection.

You ought to acquaint yourself with Masonry since it was introduced into Manitoba so we advise you to read "Freemasonry in Manitoba."

This book will tell the story of the beginnings of Lodge life in this Province. You will learn that long before Manitoba entered the Dominion as a Province the brethren had instituted a Masonic Lodge. Then you will read about the Manitoba brethren chartering a lodge in far-off Morocco.

But, let us stop here. Borrow a copy of this second book from the library or better still send two dollars to the Grand Secretary and buy a copy for your own library.

We submit these recommendations in the hope that he who seeks information will make a start along the lines suggested.

## START THEM EARLY

One aspect of the growth of Masonry in Manitoba deserves very serious attention by all Masons, assuming, as one must, that they are definitely interested in the future welfare of the Order. It is the surprisingly high average age of applicants for initiation, and the extremely small percentage of young men among them. The last official circular to hand numbered 346, and in this respect it is a fairly representative one, lists 35 applicants, with an average age of 39, and only 5 men under 30. Surely that is not the best we can do. Masonry is missing what should be its prime objective if it can attract only those whose lives are already patterned, whose characters are already formed. Warmly as we should and do welcome those who join us in their later years, it cannot be denied that our teachings will be of much greater and more lasting influence on mankind if they come to our young men in the earlier years of their maturity. That is so obvious that no argument is needed, as one also should not require to urge the benefit to the Lodges of a goodly proportion of young, energetic and enthusiastic members.

What then is needed? Are our fees higher than the young man can afford? That point might be considered. Has the Order come to be regarded as an "Old Men's Club"? Surely not, but that too is a possibility which should be faced. As a hint of one avenue which perhaps has not been very fully explored the writer would like to say that one of the most memorable Masonic functions he ever attended was one at which a Past Master took charge of the initiation of his twin sons.

The future of Masonry will be much brighter when we can report an average age for initiates at least ten years lower than it now is.

(E. H. Gurton)



## FROM THE MAIL BAG

A brother resident in Winnipeg has this to say: "There are far too many cases of the sponsors considering their duty ended when they have attached their signatures to the application form, and believe it or not, I have known instances of a seconder signing his name to an application form when he didn't even know the applicant. He had merely taken the sponsor's say so that the applicant was "a just and upright man."

Another brother, resident in London, England, a member of Norwood Lodge No. 119, in response to our invitation for items of interest kindly sent along "Start them Early." We gladly include his contribution.

From Vancouver, B.C., a Past Master of Robbie Burns Lodge No. 100, Gilbert Plains writes words of appreciation to the Editor. Thank You.

From the Secretary of Northern Light Lodge No. 10, a copy of a letter sent by a brother residing at Port Washington, New York. This communication reads in part: "Permit me to compliment you upon the contents of the December issue of 'Masonry in Manitoba.' Would that the words employed could be brought home to those responsible for the existing 'Cold War,' that they might realize the error of their ways and face about in their attitude and thus ensure Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward Men. In behalf of Port Washington Lodge I am taking the liberty of locally publishing the substance of the Christmas article, which action I sincerely trust will have your full approval."

Go ahead, my brother. The contents of this modest periodical is for the use and, we hope, benefit of all our members be they residents of Manitoba or otherwise. If any message we prepare can be of assistance to any reader he is at liberty to use what we issue wherever he thinks the brotherhood of Masonry be extended.

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## WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

We have all met the man who measures his Masonic progress by the degrees he claims to have received. He is the fellow who has not yet began to throw any effort or influence into applied Freemasonry.

If this should meet the eye of any member who holds such thoughts let him ask himself this question, "What has Masonry gained by my membership?"

You have been permitted to enjoy all the privileges of the Craft. You were expected to contribute something of yourself in return.

Be honest with yourself and with your lodge and do your part. Absentee membership is a poor substitute for the real thing. Let's make a promise with ourselves and attend the next meeting of the Lodge.



## FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

We who have been Masons for a long time are familiar with the oft repeated reference to the antiquity of the Craft—in fact we are known as Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons. There is no doubt in our minds as to our connection with the far-off days of long ago but perhaps some of our younger members may think legend and constant repetition is the basis of our claim. Here then is an opportunity to add to the knowledge of the recent initiate.

Among the treasures of the British Museum are sixty-four old Masonic manuscripts, the oldest of which is the Regius or Hellewell Manuscript, sometimes called the former because it was found in the King's Library, and sometimes the latter in honour of the man who discovered it.

This ancient document is handwritten on parchment and in a script and language as foreign to the eye today as Greek itself, yet is English. From its form and phraseology those who have made a study of such things tell us it was written sometime between 1315 and 1390 and by the document itself we learn that even then Masonry was honored for its antiquity.

Let us assume it was written six hundred years ago. Now let us visualize what this period of time represents. It was two centuries before the Reformation and about the same length of time before the word "Protestant" took on its present significance, also Columbus did not petition Queen Isabella for a like period.

Our brethren of Scottish descent know what happened in 1314. Robert the Bruce routed the English at Bannockburn and the world knows what that battle for independence has meant to every succeeding generation. And the Hundred Years' War had not yet started.

These great historic events which took place so long ago have all happened since the Regius Manuscript was prepared by the hand of some man—undoubtedly a Freemason.

Any brother interested in reading a fuller account can readily find the material in our Library. A modernized transcript will be found in Vol. 1 British Masonic Miscellany.

Shall we not say, then that those who cherish Freemasonry for its antiquity are somewhat justified in their appreciation?

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS

Brethren should address all communications intended for the Editor as follows. Editor, "Masonry in Manitoba," Masonic Temple, Winnipeg. Letters will be forwarded in due course by our Grand Secretary. We are very hopeful that 1949 will bring to our desk increasing correspondence all of which gives us a cheerful outlook for the coming months. This is your paper, my brothers, and you can add to its value by assisting the Editor from time to time with a contribution out of your Masonic experience.



## WAIVING JURISDICTION

It is quite evident that the officers of lodges, particularly in the Greater Winnipeg area, do not properly understand the procedure governing the request to another lodge for jurisdiction being waived over a petitioner for membership. A reference to section 150 of our constitution should be made in order that the requirements of Grand Lodge are complied with.

Perhaps the following will be of some assistance, each step being followed in proper succession.

*First*—A waiver of jurisdiction and a report on the character of the petitioner from a lodge in the community where he last resided must be obtained.

*Second*—If the waiver is granted and the report is favorable then a dispensation must be obtained from the Grand Master. This will cost the lodge asking the dispensation a fee of \$10.00.

*Third*—These details must be complied with before the petitioner can be ballotted upon.

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## CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is a duty which ought to mark the activity of every Freemason. It means taking a direct part in all that is good for your community. The direct part is not the indirect part. It is not leaving to others that which is ours and we have a right to do. Citizenship means we should read, think and act for ourselves, not delegating these functions to others.

To deposit your ballot on election day cannot be counted as the performance of your whole duty as a citizen.

You—the personal—YOU, can help mould public opinion. Your influence, your example, the fearless expression of your convictions is your contribution to public opinion.

Don't overlook the influence of voluntary effort! Don't forget that your elected representatives in this country of democratic ideals should be held to account, and citizenship implies that we, the voluntary multitude should see that our elected representatives do perform the tasks they undertake.

The man who takes no interest in community welfare is a withered soul and has no right to bear the name of Citizen.

The true citizen like the real Freemason must be the embodiment of the thought, principle, quality, intellectual and moral vision and opinion of his community, having in mind that to be an influence he must necessarily express these things.

Ideal Citizenship is, like all ideals, high and lofty, but we must aim to uplift, purify and revitalize our community if Citizenship and Masonry are to be meshed together in the Wheels of Life.